# Fall River Community Meeting

**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2021
**Location:** Zoom Virtual Meeting

**PRESENT**

**Elected Officials and Staff**
Paul Coogan, Mayor Fall River
Carole Fiola, Representative 6th Bristol District
Michael Rodrigues, Representative 1st Bristol District
Alan Silvia, Representative 7th Bristol District
Dana Hanson, Office of Congressman Jake Auchincloss

**Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)**
Bob Campbell
Kim Dobosz
Mike Fitzgerald
Jean Fox
Holly Palmgren
Joe Piemonte
Jennifer Tabakin

**Project Team**
Dave Agnello, AECOM
Mike Stiller, AECOM
Ken Caputo, VHB
Emily Christin, Regina Villa Associates (RVA)
Nancy Farrell, RVA
Lindsey Heffernan, City Point Partners (CPP)
Joe Sgroi, CPP

**PRESENTATION**[1]

[1] The presentation is available on the Documents & Meeting Materials page of the project website: www.mass.gov/south-coast-rail.

Nancy Farrell, RVA team member and meeting moderator, opened the meeting and went over the protocols for the virtual meeting. N. Farrell then introduced Mayor Coogan to say a few words.

Mayor Coogan mentioned how excited he is for SCR and the positive impacts the project will have on the city. He then thanked the team for taking the time go through the presentation.

N. Farrell introduced South Coast Rail Program Manager Jennifer Tabakin to welcome the attendees as well.

J. Tabakin thanked Mayor Coogan and congratulated the team for working on this program for over 20 years to get us to this point in the project. She mentioned that the project will have a positive economic effect on the city. She went over the topics that will be addressed in the presentation to follow.

N. Farrell then introduced the presenters, Jean Fox, Director of Community Engagement, Mike Fitzgerald, Deputy Program Manager, Mike Stiller, Licensed Site Professional, and Bob Campbell, Director of Design Administration.

Jean Fox gave a summary of the project status and update (slide 3) as it pertains to Phase 1 of the overall SCR project. J. Fox said project is still on track for Phase 1 service by the end of 2023, and the project is fully funded under the Capital Investment Plan. Both contracts have been awarded, and construction has started on both lines as if the end of 2020.

J. Fox also provided a summary (slide 4) of the elements of the Fall River Secondary and New Bedford Mainline packages. J. Fox then showed a map of the locations of the Freetown and Fall River Depot Stations as well as the Weaver's Cove Layover (slide 5) and emphasized how close these locations are. J. Fox then went into more detail about what is included in the Fall River Secondary portion of the program: 12.1 miles of track, 2 new stations, 1 layover facility, 10 grade crossings (none in Fall River), 8 bridges, and 10 culverts.

Mike Fitzgerald shared insights on construction activities (slide 8). He mentioned that survey work is going on along the right-of-way, property owners with encroachments have been notified by the MBTA, and notices have been sent to abutters along the right-of-way. Ads have been published in the Fall River Herald, New Bedford Times and Taunton Gazette. M. Fitzgerald gave an update on typical hours of construction, which are now between 7am-7pm, and mentioned that all contractors and site personnel adhere to Covid-19 guidelines (slide 9).

M. Fitzgerald then showed pictures of the work currently occurring, including earthwork and utility work at Weaver's Cover and installing micro piles for the foundation at Fall River Depot Station (slide 10). He showed a picture of marine sheet piles being installed, hydrant installation (slide 11), tree clearing and grubbing, rail at Campanelli Yard (slide 12), and installing sheet piles and platform micro piles (slide 13).

M. Fitzgerald talked about the traffic impacts during the first year of construction (slide 15). Short term impacts will occur at Pearce street, Fall River Depot, Weaver's Cove, and Farm Road Bridge (Horizon Way). Road closures could occur at Pearce Street, Turner Street, and Collins Street bridges but all traffic management plans will be coordinated with the city.

M. Fitzgerald provided an 8 week look ahead which will include: installing underground drainage structures and relocating power poles and lines at Weaver's Cove, installing micro piles at Fall River Depot, installing drilled piles at Freetown Station, constructing retaining walls and installing sheet piles along the right-of-way, and continuous tree clearing and grubbing (slide 16).

J. Fox gave more information about the Fall River Depot Station (slide 17). The station is located at Route 79 and Davol Street and will feature high level platforms that conform with full accessibility. The station includes 220 parking spaces, 22 bicycle spaces, accessible parking and electric vehicle charging spaces. The station also includes accessible drop off and pick up as well as bus drop off on North Main Street.

J. Fox then showed a rendering of the Fall River Depot Station (slide 18). She pointed out the fully accessible station will include ramps as well as stairs. J. Fox shared an aerial rendering of the station and layover facility (slides 19 and 20).

J. Fox provided more detail about the layover, including its address at 2680 North Main Street (slide 21). She described how the trains will be kept there overnight where they are cleaned, fueled, and minor maintenance will be performed if needed. There will be a crew quarters and employee parking, with no neighborhood parking allowed. The site will be fenced and secure. J. Fox mentioned how there will be some noise coming from the layover as trains enter and leave, but no horns should be sounding unless there are workers on or near the track. J. Fox reiterated that when the trains arrive at the end of the day the engines are turned off (slide 22).

Mike Stiller reviewed the dust control requirements at Weaver's Cove (slide 23). He mentioned that this is large site and there is a lot of earth work involved; there are a few techniques used to control dust including: water trucks, hydroseed, and smooth-rolling surfaces. Perimeter erosion controls, such as fences and hay bales, tracking pads and street sweeping are also used. M. Stiller also mentioned that dust monitoring is active, and data is collected daily.

M. Stiller described the process for managing the soils at Weaver's Cove (slide 24). The site was formerly a portion of the Shell oil terminal, so the site soils have been sampled and tested. M. Stiller stated that remaining contamination is at great depths of about 25 feet below ground level and SCR construction will not come close to that depth. He also said that there is a Release Abatement Measure (RAM) plan on file with Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) about this issue (see slide 24). He added that Fall River Depot is also listed as a contaminated site and is also on file with the DEP.

Bob Campbell described the offsite traffic mitigation that is still being developed in the design phase (slide 25); construction will begin in 2022. This work will include adding left turn lanes, new traffic signals and sidewalks at President Ave. at North Main Street as well as new pedestrian signals, and sidewalks and curb ramps at President Ave and North Davol Street. He said that it is likely that the SCR project will not do the work at President Ave and North Davol Street as it would likely be torn out as part of the Route 79 project. He added that the SCR team will continue to coordinate with the Route 79 project team throughout design.

J. Fox shared the construction schedule (slide 26) to show how work is underway now. The project is on pace to start service in late 2023. J. Fox encouraged all attendees to sign up for the e-blasts produced weekly (slide 27) so all can stay informed on the construction that is happening and where and when it will occur.

J. Fox encouraged everyone to use the hotline, 774-762-7000 (slide 28) if they have any issues due to the South Coast Rail Project. She said that the SCR team is available to meet with residents, business and elected officials during construction to discuss issues and update stakeholders. J. Fox also warned that this number will be changing, but all will be notified by the e-blast and website.

J. Fox shared the project website address (slide 29), www.mass.gov/southcoastrail, as well as an email address for residents to send comments, southcoastrail@dot.state.ma.us. She also encouraged attendees to participate in any virtual public meeting taking place involving the project.

Q&A Session:

1. Senator Michael Rodrigues: Thanked the team for the presentation and for always being available for questions.
2. Rep. Carole Fiola: Emphasized how long those affected by the project have been waiting for the work to begin, and she is excited that the time has come. She also wanted to thank the team for making the project happen.
3. Rep. Alan Silvia: There was difficulty hearing him due to audio issues, but he thanked the team.
4. Mayor Coogan: Thanked the team; he thought the presentation was clear and concise and he liked the pictures of the station layover. He looks forward to working with the team in the future.
5. Dianne (Attendee): Asked what the team is referring to by "right of way" - is it basically either side of the tracks.
    a. M. Fitzgerald: Answered that it is property on either side of the track, and it is property that the MBTA owns.
    b. Dianne (Attendee): Asked what encroachments are.
    c. M. Fitzgerald: Answered that the project has gone out on the right-of-way and has found fence lines and other items that have been moved on to the MBTA's property. The MBTA works with the homeowners to try and get these out of the way.
    d. N. Farrell: Added that anyone who has questions about their property in particular can write the South Coast Rail email.
6. Rick (Attendee): Asked if the ground power stations and locomotives will be stationed at the south end of Weaver's Cove.
    a. Ken Caputo: Answered that these items will be located at the south end of the layover, but the closest point from the layover to a residence is over 300 feet.
7. Stefan Wuensch (Attendee): Asked if the existing electrical infrastructure capacity in the Weaver's Cove neighborhood is sufficient to also power six trains' overnight needs or will there be work done by National Grid to upgrade the area capacity. If upgrades are needed, is there any expectations of electrical outages as the work is performed?
    a. K. Caputo: Answered that there will not be any outages or disruptions of service. The team has worked with National Grid who has served a Will Serve Letter which promises

that they can provide the amount of power needed. K. Caputo then pointed out on the layover rendering where the transformers and other power sources will be housed.

8. Brian Curt (Attendee): Asked if all parking spaces are surface parking or if footings will be installed so that if demand exceeds supply of parking spaces, a deck could be added.
    a. J. Tabakin: Answered that the parking lot that is being built with the station is surface level. There is opportunity for a garage in the future, but the scope of the South Coast Rail project is to build a surface level lot.
9. Dianne (Attendee): Asked where retaining walls are being constructed and will they be near homes abutting the track.
    a. M. Fitzgerald: Answered that the walls are not a great distance from the track but there are probably a few locations where they are close to some homes.
    b. K. Caputo: Added that in urban areas a different kind of wall is installed, the heights of these walls are about 6 feet high. They are used for track operation safety and to avoid wetland impacts.
    c. N. Farrell: Added that there will be fencing along the right-of-way which is very different from walls.
10. Dianne (Attendee): Said she has been approached by DOT regarding her property with a map of specific foot paths, and asked when she will be reconnected with the specifics? She believes the pandemic has pretty much stalled as far as she can see regarding her situation.
    a. N. Farrell: Asked Dianne to write to the team and the project can answer that.
11. Dana Hanson - from Congressman Jake Auchincloss's Office: No question just wanted to let everyone know that she has been informing the congressman about the SCR project as well as the Viva Fall River Project. She believes this is a wonderful project and wishes to be included in the mix.
12. Glen Zaramba (Attendee): Asked if there are plans to protect the holding area from severe weather such as hurricanes, high water or extreme cold/snow.
    a. M. Fitzgerald: Answered the building that is there was built according to current codes which includes hurricanes and storms. A lot of the electrical equipment is raised to make it resilient.
13. Paul DaSilva (Attendee): Asked how often these meetings will occur.
    a. J. Fox: Answered that the neighborhood groups are very helpful but if anyone ever wants a meeting they just need to reach out.
14. Chris D (Attendee): Asked if the project will be hiring dump trucks.
    a. M. Fitzgerald: Answered that the project will use dump trucks to bring soil in/out as well as other materials. But that is handled by the contractor.
15. MC Baxt (Attendee): Asked if the trains will run on weekends and if they will stop at Back Bay and Ruggles.
    a. J. Fox: Answered that they will not stop at Back Bay and Ruggles with Phase 1, will land at South Station. Full Build is the phase of the project that will connect through Stoughton and Canton and include a stop at Back Bay. In terms of service, it is difficult to say exactly when the trains will run because schedules change all the time, but the plan is to have 3 peak period trains to each Fall River and New Bedford in the morning and evening with a few during the day. Weekend service is planned but nothing is certain yet.

b. MC Baxt: Asked to see the map of the lines. Asked how long the ride from Fall River to Boston would be.
c. J. Fox: Answered that it would be about 90 minutes.

16. Alan Butler (Attendee): Asked what a micro pile is.
    a. M. Fitzgerald: Answered that it is a drilled shaft that will support the foundation of the station platform.
    b. K. Caputo: Added that they are used because what is normally used would not work due to based on the geotechnical studies that were done. Micro piles are just long stems in the ground that provide the foundation support in place of a spread footing foundation.
17. Mark Schmid (Attendee): Apologized that he missed the beginning but asked the projected fares were discussed.
    a. N. Farrell: Answered that that was not covered but the MBTA is still researching and a whole new fare system is being developed, but as we get closer to the start of service that information will be available. Determining fares is not part of the project responsibility.
18. Chris D (Attendee): Asked how he could get his dump truck on the project.
    a. N. Farrell: Answered that he should write to us for information about the contractor.
19. Leo (Attendee): Asked what kind of fencing will be done.
    a. K. Caputo: Answered that there are going to be various types of fences. There will be a 6-foot chain link security fence, some areas have a black vinyl fence, the layover yard has tighter mesh fence, and there will also be fencing on top of the retaining walls.
20. Rahim (Attendee): Asked when the rail in New Bedford would be completed.
    a. J. Fox: Answered that it will be the same time as Fall River which is the end of 2023.

Nancy Farrell thanked everyone for attending and encouraged people to find more information and sign up for email updates on the website, www.mass.gov/southcoastrail.